THE

PECKHAM FROLIC:

OR

NELL GWYN.

A Comedy:

IN THREE ACTS.

Jerningham Edward

London:

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1799.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Advertisement.

THE following dramatic *whim* having afforded ſome amuſement to a ſmall but poliſhed and enlightened circle, the author is tempted to offer it to the candour of a more extenſive tribunal.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Characters.

THE KING,

LORD ROCHESTER,

SIR CHARLES SEDLEY,

THOMAS KILLIGREW,

SIR OLIVER LUKE,

ANN KILLIGREW, *afterwards Lady Luke,*

NELL GWYN,

Servants, &c.

THE Scene is laid at Peckham,

(in Surry,)

Where Charles the Second frequently reſided

With ſome ſelect Companions.

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ACT I.

Enter NELL GWYN *and* KILLIGREW.

KILLIGREW.

THE King, I find, is not expected to-day.

Nell Gwyn. My hero is gone to the Olympic games at Newmarket; nor do I know when he will return.

Killigrew. That is unfortunate; for I underſtand that Sir Oliver Luke, the formal knight who was created by CROMWELL, is coming here to preſent a petition by the King's appointment.

Nell Gwyn. 'Tis very true.

Killigrew. What can we do with this ragged remnant of the commonwealth?

Nell Gwyn. I intend to keep him till the King returns.

Killigrew. He will be a projecting rock, and break the flowing courſe of our merriment.

Nell Gwyn. Perhaps not: I have been forming a ſcheme, in the proſecution of which I muſt beg your aſſiſtance. I mean to ſacrifice this Cromwelian calf at the altar of Hymen.

Killigrew. Who is to be the prieſteſs at this altar?

Nell Gwyn. Your maiden aunt, Ann Killigrew.

Killigrew. Impoſſible! you cannot be ſerious.

Nell Gwyn. I beg your attention for a moment:——Ann Killigrew has been invariably my friend. Long before I was the Infanta's deputy, ſhe was zealous in my ſervice: ſhe encouraged my propenſity to comedy, flattered my feeble talent, and obtained my admiſſion to the ſtage.

Killigrew. But what has this to do with her marrying Sir Oliver?

Nell Gwyn. Suppreſs your impatience:—— you ſhall know in a moment. My friend has laughed away 45 years, inattentive to her intereſt, and careleſs of her income, which, like a glittering bubble, glided down the ſtream ſo faſt, till at length it burſt. I propoſe, that, in this ſhipwreck of her fortune, the Oliverian knight ſhall ſave her from ſinking.——Thus I have an opportunity offered me of repaying her friendſhip.

Killigrew. This is one of your whimſical flights, an airy child of your creation—a chimera.

Nell Gwyn. No chimera, I aſſure you: Sir Oliver will moſt certainly apply to the intervention of my good offices, for the ſucceſs of his memorial: I ſhall freely promiſe him my intereſt; and ſhall intimate to him, at the ſame time, that a matrimonial connection with ſome royaliſt would ſmooth every obſtacle to his petition; as it would be a proof to the king of the truth of his political converſion.

Killigrew. I allow that the avaricious knight will be governed by his intereſt: but how will you induce the lady to connect herſelf with this formal old batchelor? take my word ſhe

will never reliſh a feaſt compoſed of ſuch obſolete ingredients.

Nell Gwyn. The perſon, my dear Killigrew, who waits for dinner, till it is very late, without having taken any intervening refreſhment, is not exacting or faſtidious concerning the cookery. Direct the application to Ann Killigrew, and you will not, I think, deſpair of my obtaining her conſent. I hear a carriage; it is moſt likely the knight with his formality and his memorial. I beg you will receive him, and inform him of my royal injunction, to ſtay here till the arrival of his majeſty. As to the matrimonial negociation, leave that entirely to me.

Killigrew. Depend upon it you will not ſucceed, in aſſimilating ſuch incongruities, as the formal knight and the laughter-loving dame, Ann Killigrew.

Nell Gwyn. If I do not ſucceed, the negociating part will divert me: In the comedy of life, as well as of the theatre, I require ſome under plot beſide the main deſign---Adieu.

[*Exit.*

Killigrew. Though I have nothing to do with the negociation, I may perhaps be able to chiſſel away ſome rough parts of the moving ſtatue.

Enter Servant, and announces SIR OLIVER LUKE.

Killigrew. I am ordered, Sir Oliver, to do the honours of this manſion, and to welcome you to Peckham---My name is Killigrew.

Sir Oliver. I am proud to form an acquaintance with ſo celebrated a young gentleman.

Killigrew. I did not expect flattery from the lips of Sir Oliver Luke: but you ſpeak the language of the country you now honour with your preſence.

Sir Oliver. There, Mr. Killigrew, you touch the difficulty under which I labour. To the language of Peckham, its manners, its uſages, its habits, I am an ignorant foreigner.

Killigrew. Do not be diſheartened on that account; we ſhall be happy to naturaliſe you among us. In the firſt place, I have to inform you, that the beautiful lady of this manſion inſiſts upon your remaining here, till his Majeſty returns.

Sir Oliver. Buſineſs of great importance, I preſume, detains him, as his Majeſty appointed me to be here this morning.

Killigrew. My good Sir Oliver, as you are not a ſhepherdeſs, you muſt not expect the royal ſhepherd to be ſcrupulouſly exact to his appointment with you; and, as you are a going to be a member of the Peckham Club, I will take the liberty of aſking a few preliminary queſtions, which compoſe as it were a qualifying teſt to your initiation.

Sir Oliver. I am ready and proud to anſwer any queſtion made me by Mr. Killigrew.

Killigrew. Can you, Sir Oliver, pour down a bumper to the King's health without coughing?

Sir Oliver. I can aſſure you I am a perfect proſelyte, as to that ceremony.

Killigrew. Can you bear the ſight of a Biſhop.

Sir Oliver. I muſt confeſs Mr. Killigrew, that my mind ſtill revolts at the lawn ſleeve; but I preſume I ſhall not meet with any of that order in this manſion.

Killigrew. Moſt aſſuredly not: the Queen of Peckham is rather a diſſenter in that particular; ſhe has no communication with the epiſcopacy.

Sir Oliver. I ſhould imagine it would be of uſe to me to ſtudy with ſome attention the royal almanack.

Killigrew. I ſhall beg leave to recommend to your notice a court calendar that I am compiling, in which you will meet with innumerable red letter-days and holy-days; but no ſaints, ſome martyrs, and ſcarce one virgin.

Sir Oliver. You there gave a ſpecimen of the idiom that obtains under this roof, of which I do not poſſeſs the firſt elements.

Killigrew. The language ſpoken here is the ſame as is uſed at Whitehall; and it is a language acquired without much difficulty, as it is not very copious: for example, we have but two vowels which govern our whole alphabet, and they are *U* and *I*: but *U* is always kept in ſlaviſh ſubjection to *I*.

Sir Oliver. I am not ſo dull, but what I can gueſs a little at your meaning, and ſhall avail myſelf of your inſtructions.

Killigrew. Here then concludes our firſt leſſon; but, before we are interrupted, permit me, Sir Oliver, to make you an offer of my intereſt with his Majeſty, with whom I am in the habit of intimacy.

Sir Oliver. My gratitude binds me to you for ever. I regret it is not in my inſignificant power to make you a return.

Killigrew. Indeed, my dear Sir Oliver, you have it in your power to ſerve me: I am now going to ſpeak in the moſt undiſguiſed manner; and I muſt tell you, that, although I reſide at Whitehall, and baſk as it were in the very rays of royalty, I am ſorry to add, that no ſilver rivulets refreſh the torrid region,---no golden ſhowers deſcend. The pipes and conductors of the royal ſtream ſleep in diſgraceful repoſe---the playful fountains of royal remuneration glitter no more to the gariſh day.

Sir Oliver. I beg, Mr. Killigrew, you will indulge me with a commentary; for I do not comprehend one word of your text.

Killigrew. I am at preſent like the reſt of my brethren the courtiers, not in a ſtate of the greateſt affluence; and if I could obtain from your generoſity the ſum of five hundred pounds, you would eſſentially ſerve me: This act of complacency would operate in your regard like a magician; it would immediately mature our commencing friendſhip, and invigorate my zeal for your intereſt.

Sir Oliver. (aſide). What muſt I do with this beggarly royaliſt? I muſt not let his intimacy with the king act to my diſfavour.

Killigrew. Well, Sir Oliver, have you loſt the powers of ſpeech? I hope his Majeſty will not take up ſo much conſidering time in granting the object of your memorial.

Sir Oliver. I accede to your requeſt, and will in a few days ſupply you with the ſum you demand.

Killigrew. Which ſum I will repay in as many months, upon my honour.

Sir Oliver. That is ſufficient.

Enter Sir CHARLES SEDLEY.

Killigrew. Give me leave, Sir Charles, to preſent you to my worthy friend, Sir Oliver Luke.

Sir Charles Sedley. The Queen of our ſociety ſent me here on purpoſe to have that honour.

Killigrew. Sir Oliver, this is the gentleman of whom Rocheſter ſays:

Sedley has that prevailing gentle art,
That can, with a reſiſtleſs charm, impart
The ſofter wiſhes to the chaſteſt heart.

Sir Oliver. I am proud to take Sir Charles Sedley by the hand: I know he is one of the moſt ſplendid ſtars of the court.

Sir Charles Sedley. I am in doubt whether or no, I ſhall be vain of that compliment; for ſince, Sir Oliver, you denominate us courtiers ſtars, it ſeems as if you thought our whole crowded conſtellation made at moſt a brilliant night, ſince the ſun of the common-wealth is gone down.

Sir Oliver. Indeed, Sir Charles, I meant no ſuch thing.

Killigrew. Sedley, you are too ſevere with my friend. Sir Oliver acknowledges his paſt errors: He wiſhes to be a convert, and has choſen me for his confeſſor.

Sir Charles Sedley. Let me alſo put a hand to this good work: I think Killigrew, between you and me, our catechumen will ſoon acquire the neceſſary qualifications.

Sir Oliver. I am ſure, under ſuch profeſſors, even a ſcholar as dull as myſelf cannot fail of making a rapid progreſs.

Sir Charles Sedley. And if you ſhould not make a rapid progreſs, it matters not; ſince your maſters take no entrance money.

Sir Oliver. (aſide). That is not ſtrictly true: one maſter has made me pay five hundred pounds entrance.

Killigrew. Suppoſe, Sedley, we give our pupil a curſory knowledge of the current expreſſions in our ſociety, which are ſtamped with our peculiar meaning. For example, Sir Oliver, when we ſpeak of a Lady's monſter, we always mean the Lady's huſband.

Sir Charles Sedley. You will frequently hear us ſay, ſuch a Lady has a ſhort memory; obſerve this has nothing to do with the retentive faculty in general, it only ſignifies that the Lady is inadvertent to one ſmall unimportant article of the matrimonial ſtate---that is to ſay, the vow of fidelity.

Sir Oliver. I am apt to believe the Ladies at Whitehall are not peculiarly gifted with memory.

Killigrew. Bravo, Sir Oliver, you are an apt ſcholar.

Sir Charles Sedley. If you ſhould hear us, by chance, call a man an unicorn; the meaning we apply to that term is, that the Gentleman is poſſeſſed of a wife, who has only once deviated from the conjugal path, and therefore he is not entitled to the full honours of the fraternity.

Killigrew. I think it is quite ſuperfluous to load Sir Oliver's memory with that term;

for I ſincerely believe, that, among the whole herd of courtiers, there is not one ſingle unicorn.

Sir Charles. We have other expreſſions which we admit; though, like bad coin, they ſcarce amount to half the value they pretend to. ——When any perſon among us ſays, 'I pro-'miſe you' ſuch a thing; we interpret that expreſſion into a conditional value: that is to ſay, the perſon intends to keep his promiſe, unleſs ſome intervening objection ſhould ariſe. ——Is it not ſo, Killigrew?

Killigrew. Moſt aſſuredly! Promiſes, with us, diſſolve as eaſily as ſnow into water, when the ſun ſhines.

Sir Charles. Again: Suppoſe a man borrows money of you, and he ſolemnly declares that he will repay it *upon his honour*: we explain that affirmative negatively.

Sir Oliver. How negatively?

Sir Charles. That he means never to return the money.

Sir Oliver. Indeed!

Sir Charles. You appear ruffled, Sir, at what I ſay.

Killigrew, (confuſed.) Sir Charles, you talk a little at random in the laſt inſtance.

Sir Charles. What the devil is the matter? you both ſeem ſo confounded.

Sir Oliver. I have no reaſon to be diſturbed, ſince Mr. Killigrew tells me, that a promiſe, in the circle of Whitehall, diſſolves like ſnow before the ſun.

Enter NELL GWYN.

Sir Charles. Here comes the fair deity of our temple.

Nell Gwyn. I make no apology, Sir Oliver, for not waiting upon you ſooner, as I knew you was in ſuch agreeable company.

Sir Oliver. Indeed, madam, theſe young gentlemen have been extremely entertaining, and have alſo condeſcended to give me ſome inſtructions, of which I ſhall avail myſelf.

Sir Charles Sedley. You are too courteous; any information you may have received from me, is not worth the value of a groat.

Sir Oliver. I aſk your pardon, Sir Charles; your information is to me worth 500l.

Killigrew. You affix, Sir Oliver, too literal a meaning to what Sedley juſt now advanced.

Nell Gwyn. Gentlemen, you muſt take another time to ſettle your diſpute; I beg you will leave me alone with my new acquaintance,

as I have ſomething to communicate to Sir Oliver of a private nature.

Sir Charles and Killigrew. We obey your commands. [*Exeunt.*

Sir Oliver (aſide) What would our reverend Elders ſay, if they knew I was tête-a-tête with Nell Gwyn?

Nell Gwyn. I am appriſed of the object of the paper you have to preſent to a certain great perſonage, and you may rely on the influence I may poſſeſs with regard to his Majeſty.

Sir Oliver. Your affability equals your beauty.

Nell Gwyn. I muſt, however, inform you, that my warm wiſhes for your ſucceſs will not be powerful enough to perſuade his Majeſty to accede to a grant of ſuch magnitude, without ſome ſtrong aſſurance of your being a ſincere and contrite convert to the royal cauſe.

Sir Oliver. (Emphatically) I renounce the Common-wealth.

Nell Gwyn. Yes! like the ſhard-born beetle that creeps out of a ruin. But, to throw off the veil of diſguiſe, I aſſure you, Sir Oliver, that nothing would ſtrengthen your intereſt with the King ſo much, as the entering into a matrimonial contact with ſome lady of the court.

Sir Oliver. What young lady of the Court would ſtoop to a knight of the late Common-wealth, whoſe age is fifty-eight?

Nell Gwyn. There are ladies who have paſſed their meridian, and whoſe years amounting to the number (I'll ſuppoſe) of forty-two, would eaſily aſſimilate with the number fifty-eight. The two ſeparate numbers, thus coupled, would ſummed up make exactly 4258, which union carries with it a good omen; for it is the number that came up the firſt prize in the laſt year's lottery.

Sir Oliver. I am afraid, Madam, you are bantering with your humble ſervant.

Nell Gwyn. I never was more in earneſt in my life: I have a lady in view, who would ſuit you in every reſpect: She is about the age I mentioned; diſplaying a rich ſhew of autumnal beauty; attended by all the charms that affability, courteouſneſs, ſprightlineſs, and innocence, can beſtow.

Sir Oliver. You will forgive me, if I interpoſe a doubt concerning the laſt article of the inventory.

Nell Gwyn. Her innocence, I ſuppoſe, you mean?

Sir Oliver. I do!

Nell Gwyn. The laſt article of the inventory is as much her property as her other good qualities: and, it is an additional merit to have lived ſo many years in the warm climate of Whitehall, without ſingeing the ermine of her innocence. Lord Rocheſter frequently compares her to an iſicle hanging over the mouth of a volcano:---and take notice, Sir Oliver, that Rocheſter is of great authority on a ſubject of this nature.

Sir Oliver. But this immaculate lady, whoever ſhe may be, knows nothing of your humble ſervant.

Nell Gwyn. I will perform the part of Cupid in this buſineſs: I will lay the corner-ſtone of this new temple of love.

Sir Oliver. If it was the firſt day of April, I ſhould be apt to think, Madam, that you intended to——You underſtand what I mean.

Nell Gwyn. Indeed, Sir Oliver, if I had a mind to be ſevere, I might ſay that the firſt of April need not take the trouble of coming for the purpoſe you allude to, as it would find the work already done: but I once more aſſure you, that I never was more reſolutely

in earneſt. The marrying a lady for whom the King entertains the higheſt regard, will be the means, the only means, of promoting the ſucceſs of your memorial. The coming into a matrimonial contact with a Lady of the Court, will be a paſſport to the royal favour ---it will, like the waters of Lethe, waſh out of remembrance your original ſpot of republicaniſm.

Sir Oliver. I begin to think you are giving me wholeſome advice---But may I not inquire who the fair Incognita is you intend for my bride?

Nell Gwyn. I am happy to obſerve this youthful impatience in you---nevertheleſs, you ſhall not know who your bride is, till you are introduced to her; which will be in the courſe of a few hours.

Sir Oliver. I confeſs, there is ſomething romantic in all this, which does not diſpleaſe me.

Nell Gwyn. You ſhall have reaſon to boaſt the power of your attraction. The iſicle, which did not melt as it hung over the Whitehall volcano, ſhall diſſolve before the firebrand of the commonwealth: Don't knit your brow, Sir Oliver, it does not become you---Indulge my

frolickſome manner of talking; no reproach, no retroſpective cenſure was intended. Look upon me as your friend---Adieu. I adviſe you, Sir Oliver, to go into the garden, and meditate among the flowers: the perfume of the aromatic tribe ſoftens the heart and diſpoſes it to love; it ſtimulates the imagination and tinges it with all the bright diverſity of colouring---To the following lines Sir John Davies attempered his lyre, in the days of the Virgin Queen.

" 'Tis ſaid that odours purify the brain,
" Awake the fancy, and the ſoul refine:
" Hence Old Devotion incenſe did ordain,
" To make man's ſpirits apt for thoughts divine."

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

Enter ANN KILLIGREW *and* NELL GWYN.

ANN KILLIGREW.

IT is impoſſible not to laugh at this mad ſcheme of yours.

Nell Gwyn. You ought to laugh, for you are the winner---conſider his immenſe fortune.

Ann Killigrew. How came the knight ſo eaſily into your toils ?

Nell Gwyn. I led him to think, that his marrying a lady of the court would be the only method of accompliſhing the object of his petition

Ann Killigrew. But I beg you will give me a ſhort catalogue of the qualities of my bridegroom.

Nell Gwyn. In the firſt place he has the character of good nature: as for his wit, I have not much to boaſt of; you, my dear, have enough of that commodity to ſerve you both.

Ann Killigrew. How is his perſon?

Nell Gwyn. His perſon obſerves a ſtrict neutrality between invitation and diſguſt.

Ann Killigrew. Well, as long as he is rich, and perfectly good humoured---

NellGwyn. I make no doubt, but your dexterity will enable you to mould this republican lump into any form you pleaſe. I muſt, however, not forget to acquaint you, that he made a very penetrating inquiry into your moral character; and, though he heſitated belief, I convinced him at laſt of the purity of your conduct.

Ann Killigrew, Indeed, my dear, I cannot but ſmile at the having you for a witneſs of my virgin innocence.

Nell Gwyn. This witneſs, however, has effectually ſerved you. My friendſhip in this inſtance triumphed over all my ſuſpicions.

Ann Killigrew. I am obliged to your friendſhip, but not to your ſuſpicions.

Nell Gwyn. Pretty innocent! are then my ſuſpicions groundleſs?

Ann Killigrew. Though it is impoſſible to refrain from laughing, at the arch look you now aſſume, and the ſignificant tone of voice you gave to the laſt queſtion: yet, the giddy laughter-loving Ann Killigrew can, with truth, affirm that your ſuſpicions are not founded in fact.

Nell Gwyn. To indulge that eaſy unreſtricted flow of converſation, which peculiarly diſtinguiſhes our friendſhip, I muſt confeſs that I cannot eaſily comprehend, how you have eſcaped every ſnare that art and ingenuity prepared for you, in the younger part of your life.

Ann Killigrew. You allude, I ſuppoſe, to the report concerning the Duke of Buckingham.

Nell Gwyn. I do! and alſo to the report relative to Sir John Suckling, St. Evremond, Rocheſter, and even, old Waller.

Ann Killigrew. I muſt own I had ſome felicitous eſcapes from theſe gentlemen: I muſt, however, except againſt one perſon on your liſt; I mean Sir John Suckling, with whom I never was a favourite.

Nell Gwyn. There are enough remaining on the liſt, after Sir John is eraſed.

Ann Killigrew. As for Buckingham, he was very aſſiduous, and extremely in earneſt: he

called upon me one day, when he was a candidate for my favour, at a time when, in the heat of his canvaſs, he preſumed of his election. He found me reading the poem of Abſalom and Achitophel (then recently publiſhed), in which you know Buckingham is excellently pourtrayed under the denomination of Zimri. I aſked his Grace in what character he paid me the honour of a viſit---whether as a lover, a painter, a chymiſt, a fidler, or a buffoon?——. This, I ſuppoſe, enraged him; for he abruptly withdrew, and never returned.---So much for Buckingham---

St. Evremond was alſo very preſſing to obtain my favour. He brought with him that refined civiliſation, that elegance of manners, that playful converſe, that enamelled wit, ſo characteriſtic of his countrymen. He talked a philoſophical jargon, which I did not comprehend, though it pleaſed me. He laughed at the folly of the reſtrictive virtues, and ſent them all to Milton's paradiſe of fools. But his uglineſs unfaſcinated the powers of his eloquence: my Guardian Angel ſat aſtride on the large wen on his forehead, and ſaved me from ruin------ſo much for St. Evremond.

Nell Gwyn. (Laughing) I think your memoirs exceedingly entertaining; I beg you will continue your narrative.

Ann Killigrew. Old Waller uſed alſo to ſhoot at me, but his bullets being nothing more than poetical ſugar-plumbs, no miſchief enſued. But the moſt formidable battle that ever I was engaged in, was againſt Rocheſter: It was ſome years ago, when he acted the part of a German conjuror in the city: the celebrity of the German fortune-teller excited my curioſity, for I had not the ſmalleſt intimation who it was—But I tire you perhaps.

Nell Gwyn. Quite the reverſe, I am impatience to hear the remainder of your ſtory.

Ann Killigrew. I dreſſed myſelf in the moſt ſimple manner, in the *coſtume* of a village girl: and ſtole away (at night) into the city, in a hackney coach. As ſoon as I was introduced to the venerable necromancer, he accoſted me in theſe words:---"My beautiful little ruſtic, you will moſt certainly be wedded to the youth you love."---To which gracious prophecy I returned a very humble, aukward, and cottage-like curteſey. He added---"I perceive however, my dear girl, that the ſtars will not conſent to the marriage you have ſo much at heart, till

you have made ſome other perſon happy firſt; and the ſooner you make ſome perſon happy, the ſooner you will poſſeſs the youth of your affection." He next put a Portugal piece into my hand, then locked the door, threw away his necromantic garment, tore off his whiſkers, diſmiſſed his hoary locks, and ſuddenly the German Doctor was transformed into the gay, the daring, the amorous Rocheſter.

Nell Gwyn. I begin to tremble for you.

Ann Killigrew. In that alarming moment, where was my governeſs? She had run off with a Captain of the Guards the day before. My three maiden aunts, where were they?----the three ſcare-crow guardians of the Heſperian fruit! They were caterwauling round ſome card table. Where was my poor grandmother? She was at reſt with my anceſtors, in the honourable vault of the Killigrews?

Nell Gwyn. Where was your virginity?

Ann Killigrew. Secure in the circle of ſix watchmen, who broke open the door, attended by conſtables who came with a warrant to ſeize the German Doctor, under the notion of his being a ſpy. I applied to the reverend watchmen for protection, and they conducted me

through Maiden-Alley, to a coach.---So much for Rocheſter.

Enter Sir CHARLES SEDLEY.

Sir Charles Sedley. I have to tell Miſs Ann Killigrew, that her inamorato will wait upon her immediately: He has almoſt finiſhed his toilet: I left him adjuſting his new black perriwig, whoſe virgin curls have never been kiſſed by the amorous gales. He has been ſcenting his buſhy eye-brows with the eſſence of jeſſamine.

Ann Killigrew. Do you envy his deſtiny?

Sir Charles Sedley. Upon my ſoul, I think he is a lucky dog, and I rejoice to find you are going to honour the married ſtate: An unmarried woman is an inſtrument without a muſician.

Nell Gwyn. A raviſhing lute, without a lutiſt.

Sir Charles Sedley. Or as an old lady obſerved to me the other day,---'we unmarried women' ſaid ſhe 'are the roſes without a thorn.'

Ann Killigrew. But why, Sir Charles, don't you practiſe the doctrine you recommend? You

are a widower, but as you do not appear a diſconſolate one, why do you not reſume the conjugal yoke?

Sir Charles Sedley. It is my intention, I look upon myſelf a *pierre d'attente*, a corner-ſtone left out from a building to be connected with another edifice.

Ann Killigrew. I really am of opinion, the marriage ſtate has ſeveral advantages.

Nell Gwyn. Particularly if the huſband be as rich as Sir Oliver.

Ann Killigrew. I mean independent of that conſideration.

Nell Gwyn. It ſecures one from temptation.

Sir Charles Sedley. From which one is never ſecure in a ſtate of celibacy, not even in a nunnery. I have an old aunt a nun at Antwerp, who is frequently troubled with temptations: The Abbeſs propoſed that ſhe ſhould ring the church bell whenever ſhe was tempted, to give notice to the community to pray for her, and ſometimes the old lady is ringing the whole day long.

Nell Gwyn. Bravo, Sir Charles! This is a moſt excellent family anecdote.

Enter Sir OLIVER *and* KILLIGREW.

Nell Gwyn. Sir Oliver, give me leave to preſent you to Miſs Ann Killigrew, my moſt intimate friend, whom I propoſe as an amiable companion for the remainder of your journey through life.

[Sir OLIVER *Bows, offers to ſpeak, but cannot proceed.*

Sir Charles Sedley. Sir Oliver, I perceive is tongue-tied with extaſy.

Ann Killigrew. I ſuppoſe it is incumbent on me, Sir Oliver, to expreſs my gratitude for the flattering diſtinction with which you are going to honour me.

Nell Gwyn. My dear Ann, I beg you will not be rhetorical, and attempt any flouriſhing ſpeech:---As the converſation of lovers affects ſolitude, let me adviſe you to accompany Sir Oliver in the long ſhady arbour.

Ann Killigrew. I certainly can have no objection to what you propoſe.

Sir Oliver. I cheriſh the propoſal, and ſhould wiſh to have ſome private conference with this lady. Give me leave to attend you.

[*Offers his hand.*

Nell Gwyn. Miſs Killigrew, I wiſh you a pleaſant walk, I hope my dear, you will not ſtand in need of your friends the watchmen, upon this occaſion.

[*Exeunt* Ann Killigrew *and* Sir Oliver.

Well I muſt own I take a pride in having accompliſhed this buſineſs.

Killigrew. This buſineſs is not ſo near being accompliſhed as you imagine. Sir Oliver juſt now aſſured me, that he would defer the ceremony till he had the approbation of the match from the King himſelf.

Nell Gwyn. I am diſpleaſed to hear this: It is quite uncertain when the King will be here: And if the Knight ſhould go from hence before the ceremony has taken place, we ſhall loſe him without hope; for ſhould he return to his round-headed relations---

Killigrew. They would laugh him out of conceit with this marriage.

Nell Gwyn. I aſk your pardon; they never laugh, but they will ſigh and groan him out of conceit with this union, and abſolutely diſſuade him from a courtly monarchical irreligious connection.

Enter LORD ROCHESTER.

Lord Rocheſter. Queen Eleanor, I am the moſt faithful of your ſubjects. I find I am come to aſſiſt at a wedding. Is it poſſible, as I am this inſtant informed, that you are meditating ſo incongruous an aſſimilation, as to ingraft the ſavage oliverian crab on the luſcious pine-apple?

Nell Gwyn. Even ſo! But there is a difficulty which has juſt now occurred. The Knight will not accept, it ſeems, of the hand of my friend, without the King's concurrence, or rather his command; and as I do not expect the King, I am afraid the republican bear will break through my toils.

Lord Rocheſter. I have a remedy at hand. I will ply him rapidly with the circling bottle after dinner, and make him ſo amorous, that I will charm from him a promiſe to marry the Lady to-morrow morning.

Nell Gwyn. No, no, I have a better inventive head at a criſis than your Lordſhip. As you have performed the part of a conjurer with ſuch ſucceſs; ſuppoſe you try how you can act the King! The Cromwelian Knight has no per-

ſonal knowledge of you, and has never ſeen his Majeſty; it will conſequently be no difficult matter to impoſe upon him.

Lord Rocheſter. I am ready to perform the part you aſſign to me in this new Comedy, as it is for the benefit of Ann Killigrew.

Nell Gwyn. When the Knight is preſented to your Majeſty, you will expreſs to him your full approbation of the match, and then I will attend upon the willing pair to town, and deſire one of the King's Chaplains to tie the knot immediately.

Killigrew. It is a moſt excellent ſtratagem.

Nell Gwyn. Sir Charles! I beg you will run to the King's apartment and bring back with you the garter and the blue ribband.

[*Exit* Sir CHARLES SEDLEY.

Lord Rocheſter. But will not his Majeſty be diſpleaſed at the liberty I am now going to aſſume.

Nell Gwyn. I will take upon myſelf the whole impropriety of this tranſaction: I am certain it will excite his laughter, and the King will lament that he did not come time enough to be a partaker of the frolick.

Enter Sir CHARLES SEDLEY.

Nell Gwyn. Let me inveſt your Majeſty---

[*She takes the ribband, and gives it to Lord Rocheſter, who puts it on.*

Now gird your knee with this little badge, which I am apt to pronounce a whimſical badge of honour, ſince (if Hiſtory ſpeaks the truth) it was invented in memorial of a young ſlovenly Counteſs who did not know how to tie her garters.

Sir Charles Sedley. (Bowing). May your Majeſty's ſhort reign be a proſperous one!

Nell Gwyn. Go you two, directly, to the lovers: You, Sir Charles, inform the knight of his Majeſty's arrival; and you, Killigrew, whiſper in the ear of my friend, the ſtratagem that is carrying on, and order the carriage to be got ready immediately.

[*Exeunt* SIR CHARLES & KILLIGREW.

Lord Rocheſter. Do not be offended, if, under the ſanction of my tranſitory royal prerogative, I addreſs you in a language I never dared utter before---Venus has many Cupids which at once denote her empire and the extent of her benevolence.

Nell Gwyn. For ſhame, Rocheſter! is this acting a generous part toward your abſent friend the King. If I had any pretenſions to the title of Venus, my Cupids ſhould not be link-boys to thruſt their torches in every face.

Lord Rocheſter. I intended no offence---it was only my libertine way of talking.

Nell Gwyn. The man, who now poſſeſſes my undivided attachment, ſhall ever hold undivided poſſeſſion. He is the final object of my wiſhes, my home, my *conſtant* reſidence. I beg you will look upon my former frailties as ſtations in my journey to the abode, from which I will never, never depart.

Lord Rocheſter. Excellently, moſt excellently ſaid. You have long gained my admiration, you have now conquered my eſteem.

Nell Gwyn. The eſteem of Rocheſter, I fear, is a coin of doubtful value; however, ſuch as it is, I will accept it.

Enter SIR OLIVER LUKE, ANN KILLIGREW, Sir CHARLES SEDLEY *and* KILLIGREW.

Permit me, Sir Oliver, to preſent you to his Majeſty.

[SIR OLIVER *kneels and kiſſes* LORD ROCHESTER'S *hand.*

Sir Oliver, (much confuſed). This honour Sire---this accumulated honour, moſt religious Sovereign---owing to her Ladyſhip, I aſk pardon, I mean Mrs. Gwyn---I crave forgiveneſs, I ſhould ſay Miſs Eleanor Gwyn.

Lord Rocheſter. It is impoſſible for me, Sir Oliver, to do juſtice to your elegant harangue by my own words---ſo I will only ſay that I am happy to commence an acquaintance with you.

Sir Oliver. Here is the petition which your Majeſty knows I was to deliver into your royal hands.

Lord Rocheſter. My royal hands will put the petition into my royal pocket, and ſhall conſider the contents at ſome other time and in ſome other place: For buſineſs is excluded from this ſpot, and only mirth and love are admitted. And therefore I rejoice to find you are going to add to the feſtivity of Peckham, by eſpouſing my good friend Ann Killigrew.

Sir Oliver. I am overjoyed to hear my intended marriage meets with the royal approbation.

Lord Rocheſter. It meets with my moſt decided approbation, and will be a ſtrong argument with me in favour of your petition.

Nell Gwyn. I told you ſo, Sir Oliver!

Lord Rocheſter. I hope before Apollo reclines on the lap of Thetis, you will conduct the fair nymph to the Hymeneal Temple.

Sir Oliver. Are your royal words addreſſed to me?

Lord Rocheſter. My meaning is, Sir Oliver, that I hope before the cloſe of day, my friend will be entitled to the honourable appellation of Lady Luke.

Sir Oliver. I am your Majeſty's moſt obedient ſubject.

Lord Rocheſter. If you pleaſe, Sir Oliver, I will write a note to my worthy friend Juxon, the Archbiſhop, and order him to perform the ceremony.

Sir Oliver. By no means---by no means---by no means.

Nell Gwyn. An inferior dignitary will anſwer the purpoſe as effectually.

Lord Rocheſter. Why did Sir Oliver ſtart at my propoſal.

Nell Gwyn. Sir Oliver is afflicted with an hereditary diſeaſe, called the anti-mitral-anti-pathy, which time only can eradicate.

Enter THE KING.

The King. Heyday, what are you maſquerading in the morning?

[*Nell Gwyn runs up to the King and whiſpers.*

Lord Rocheſter, (aſide). I fear I am going to be dethroned.

Killigrew, (aſide). This ſudden arrival will put an end to the wedding.

Ann Killigrew, (aſide to Sir Charles Sedley). I begin to fear I muſt ſtill perform, as you call it, the irkſome function of a veſtal.

The King, (advancing towards Lord Rocheſter. I aſk your Majeſty's pardon, I did not at firſt perceive you was here.

Lord Rocheſter. I am this inſtant arrived!

The King (to Nell Gwyn). I little imagined the King would have been at Peckham before me.

Nell Gwyn, (taking the King by the hand). Give me leave, Sir Oliver Luke, to preſent this brother knight, Sir Charles Stuart, to you.

Sir Oliver. I am happy in forming an acquaintance with Sir Charles Stuart: I preſume

you received the honour of knighthood from his preſent Majeſty.

The King. I can't ſay I did.

Sir Oliver. Then I ſuppoſe your honours flow from the ſame fountain as mine.

The King. You mean the Protector?

Sir Oliver. Yes! Sir Charles Stuart.

The King. My title does not ſtream from ſo immaculate a fountain; my family is not under any particular obligations to the Protector.

Nell Gwyn. Sir Charles Stuart, you muſt not engroſs your new acquaintance; for as I juſt informed you, he is going to be married. The carriage is at the door. Killigrew and I will attend Sir Oliver and Miſs Killigrew to town, and we will bring them back in the evening bride and bridegroom.

The King. I aſſure you, Sir Oliver, you are going to be united with the moſt amiable woman in England. If I had not been unluckily yoked in marriage with a d----'d Portugal merchant's daughter, I ſhould myſelf have propoſed to her. Give me leave, Miſs Killigrew, to have the honour of handing you to your carriage.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

Enter The KING, Sir CHARLES SEDLEY, *and* LORD ROCHESTER.

LORD ROCHESTER.

AT your command, I retain the honour of being your Majeſty's uſurper.

The King. I beg the farce may be continued till the bride and bridegroom are introduced. Did not you ſay, Sedley, they were returned?

Sir Charles Sedley. They are now coming up ſtairs.

Lord Rocheſter. Is the reigning monarch or the pretender to ſalute the bride firſt?

The King. The reigning monarch, by all means.

Enter SIR OLIVER LUKE, LADY LUKE, NELL GWYN, *and* KILLIGREW,

Nell Gwyn. I have the honor of preſenting Lady Luke to your Majeſty.

Lord Rocheſter. Allow me to touch theſe virgin lips.---Sir Oliver, I give you joy.

The King. Your Majeſty is incorrect---Lady Luke is the diſpenſer of joy upon this occaſion. Sir Oliver, you and your amiable conſort have my beſt wiſhes.

Sir Oliver. Methinks, Sir Charles Stuart, you are too free with his Majeſty.

The King. My dear brother knight, you will perceive preſently that I ſhall take a ſtill greater freedom with his Majeſty.

Sir Oliver. In what manner?

The King. I ſhall enter into a plot againſt him, and dethrone him.

Sir Oliver. Dethrone his Majeſty!-----What blaſphemy ſtrikes my ear?

The King. A blaſphemy, Sir Oliver, to which your ear is not a virgin.

Sir Oliver. Sir Charles Stuart, I wear a ſword.

The King. Then draw it in defence of his Majeſty, whoſe reign will not extend to five minutes more.

Sir Oliver (to Nell Gwyn). Good Lady, tell me what all this means?

Nell Gwyn. Don't be alarmed.

The King. I have no intention, Sir Oliver, of involving you in my plot, and of endangering your life, or of making Lady Luke a diſconſolate widow.

Sir Oliver (to Lady Luke). How can you laugh at this indecorous language?

Lady Luke. Look round, Sir Oliver---You ſee every perſon in the room is laughing.

Sir Oliver. Damn theſe Peckham jokes, I don't comprehend them.

The King. Sir Charles Sedley, I deſire you to ungarniſh his Majeſty.

[*Lord Rocheſter reſigns the Ribband and Garter to* Sir CHARLES SEDLEY.

Sir Oliver. Is it poſſible?---is it poſſible?

[*The King puts on the ribband and garter.*

The King. Now, Sir Oliver, will you kneel and ſalute my hand?

Sir Oliver. I had rather be cuckolded this very night.

Lady Luke. I am much obliged to you Sir Oliver.

Sir Charles. I would be obliged to him, Lady Luke, if I was you, and take him at his word.

Lord Rocheſter. And comfort me,---a poor dethroned monarch!

Nell Gwyn. It is now time to put an end to this idle merriment. I direct my diſcourſe to you, Sir Oliver, and now inform you that the innocent ſtratagem which has been played upon you was my invention, for the purpoſe of ſecuring to my friend ſo honourable a partner for life.

Lord Rocheſter. 'Tis very true!

Sir Oliver (to Lord Rocheſter). Are you not Sir, the King?

Lord Rocheſter. For the misfortune of England, I am not.

Sir Oliver. Who, then, is King?

Lord Rocheſter. Your brother Knight, Sir Charles Stuart.

Lady Luke. Indeed, Sir Oliver, that Gentleman ſpeaks the truth: he is Lord Rocheſter;

and the perſon, whom you imagine to be Sir Charles Stuart, is, upon my word, his moſt gracious Majeſty, to whoſe protection I now conſign my huſband, Sir Oliver Luke---

[*Leading Sir Oliver to the King.*

Sir Oliver. Do I dream? or have I loſt my ſenſes to day?

The King. Not more at preſent than any other day: but I truſt you will indulge this Peckham frolic, and I can aſſure you that your brother knight, Sir Charles Stuart, will prompt King Charles to grant to Sir Oliver the object of his petition.

Sir Oliver. *(bowing)* I am your Majeſty's truly devoted ſubject.

The King. As the table is prepared, and ſpread with a ſplendid collation, let us ſit down in harmony and goodhumour: diſmiſs the ſervants, and let the dumb-waiters, who have long had the character of being very diſcreet, have the full benefit of our convivial wit and merriment---

[*They ſit down to table.*

Lord Rocheſter. I perfectly concur with his Majeſty, concerning the advantage of dumb-

waiters. The eaſe and freedom of convivial feſtivity is thus better aſcertained, with all the gay privileges of Commenſality.

The King. I never before heard the word commenſality.

Lord Rocheſter. It is an expreſſive word, invented by my friend, Sir Thomas Browne, the celebrated phyſician at Norwich.

Nell Gwyn. Is it poſſible, Lord Rocheſter, that you ſhould call that man your friend? wicked, profane man! he wiſhes, in his *Religio Medici*, theſe are his very words, "that we might procreate like trees without conjunction!

Sir Charles Sedley. This is treaſon againſt the enthroned majeſty of nature.

Killigrew. What does Lady Browne ſay to ſuch a contemptuous declaration?

Lord Rocheſter. She, like a loving wife, obtained his pardon from the queen of nature, on condition that he ſhould make an *Aménde Honorable*, to which, it ſeems, he has conſented, for he is the father of ten children.

The King. As I am not a diſciple of Sir Thomas Browne, nor conſequently a friend to the arboreal procreation, I propoſe a bumper to the happineſs of the bride and bridegroom.

Lord Rocheſter. I ſecond the propoſal.

[*They drink to the bride and bridegroom.*

The King. Now tell me, Rocheſter, what is become of your hebdomadal ſeraglio? I ſaw lately Monday and Saturday walking arm in arm together.

Sir Charles Sedley. Your Majeſty will ſee them no more.

Lord Rocheſter. I beg, Sedley, you will not ſay any thing of this affair,

The King. Now my curioſity is excited, I muſt intreat you, Sedley, to proceed.

Sir Charles Sedley I ſhall moſt certainly obey your commands: and ſhall firſt inform my audience, that Rocheſter, in the plenitude of extravagance, collected ſeven nymphs, which he denominated by the days of the week. The beautiful hours that draw the car in Guido's famous picture, were not to be compared to the *days* of Rocheſter. They were, however, not halcyon days. Sunday, Monday, Tueſday, and Wedneſday were tempeſtuous: Thurſday was a peeviſh, ungenial day: Friday was ſullen, and cloudy: and Saturday thundered like a ſcold.

Nell Gwyn. Poor Rocheſter!

Sir Charles Sedley. To conclude my narrative debts were incurred: the treaſury of Rocheſter, not being adequate to the expenditure of the ſeven days. Yeſterday morning, *(horreſco referrens)* the whole week was ſent to jail.

Lord Rocheſter. Lazy, extravagant gypſies, they deſerve their fate.

Sir Oliver. Indeed, Lord Rocheſter, the epithet of lazy is ill applied: it appears to me that it was a very induſtrious week: for I do not meet with one *holy* day in it.

The King. Bravo, Sir Oliver, I give you credit for that pun.

Sir Oliver. I am bold to tell your Majeſty, that I ſeldom offer at a ſmart ſaying; but when I do, it is my own:——I do not borrow from others.

The King. You are then, Sir Oliver, like a country ſquire, who lives upon his own farm: who kills his own calf, and plucks his own geeſe.

Nell Gwyn. With your Majeſty's permiſſion, I will call for a ſong---I ſhould wiſh to hear the Soldier's Catch——the words by Sir Charles Sedley.

[SIR CHARLES, LORD ROCHESTER, *and* KILLIGREW, *ſing.*

THE SOLDIERS' CATCH.

If ſome blood we have ſpilt,
To compound for the guilt
In Love's camp we'll do double duty;
Mankind we'll repair.
With the leave of the Fair,
And pay our arrears to true beauty.

The King. Moſt excellently performed! obſerve, Sir Oliver, as you have been a ſoldier, the moral of the ſong ſeems particularly pointed at you.

Sir Oliver. I am happy to ſee your Majeſty ſo facetious.

Nell Gwyn. As we have already drank to the bride and bridegroom, I beg leave to propoſe my favourite toaſt.

[SIR OLIVER *looks at his watch.*

Lord Rocheſter. Sir Oliver! it is againſt the canon-law of this ſociety to look at a watch.

The King. I think, Sir Oliver ſhould be exempted from the rule: it denotes no drowſineſs in Sir Oliver---His looking at his watch is the

ſame thing as looking at the countenance of Lady Luke; but I give you notice, Sir Oliver, that, if you look again at your watch, I ſhall obey your intimation, and adjourn the court.

Sir Oliver. I hope I have committed no indecorum: I am now all impatience, madam, for your favourite toaſt.

Nell Gwyn. *(riſing)* Every body except his Majeſty muſt ſtand up, while my toaſt is going round.

[*Lifting up her glaſs.*

I drink to the Royal oak, which, when the hell-hounds of rebellion were in full chace, ſpread around its hoſpitable arms, and ſheltered from deſtruction the monarch of my heart! hail to the Royal Oak!

Omnes. Hail to the Royal oak!

The King. It becomes me now to riſe, and make my acknowledgments to the company for the honour they have conferred upon my good friend the oak. Now I will beg leave to offer a toaſt of my own; which the miſtreſs of the houſe can witneſs is the one that I conſtantly give.

Lord Rocheſter. Then, Sir, your toaſt is not a woman.

Nell Gwyn. I aſk your pardon, Lord Rocheſter, it is a woman.

Sir Charles Sedley. 'Tis then a beautiful woman you frequently ſee before your glaſs.

Nell Gwyn. No, Sir! it is a Lady I never ſaw in my life. And, as there is an intereſting circumſtance annex'd to her, I humbly intreat his Majeſty to relate it to the company.

The King. I am very willing to comply with your requeſt.---At that eventful period of my life when I was obliged to wander in diſguiſe, it happened that at the cloſe of day, tortured with hunger and overpowered with fatigue, I adventured to approach the door of a magnificent ſeat, in order to ſolicit the charity of a little food. A young man, who by his emotion appeared to know me, begged he might introduce me to the reſpectable Lady of the manſion---a widow, whoſe name was Wyndham, and who was impatient, he ſaid, of the honour of receiving me beneath her roof. He then led me into an antique hall, where ſat, in an oaken richly carved chair, the aged Lady. A pleaſurable air of affability illumed her countenance; ſtill did her faded cheek diſplay a lingering grace! a winter-flower! Then ſlowly

riſing from her ſeat, the venerable form advanced, and thus ſhe accoſted me:---" Three ſons! my valiant ſons! were ſlain in battle, fighting in your father's cauſe! and at their ſide my little grandſon, ſcarce fourteen, my lovely, my endearing Henry, fell!---Since that ſad day oppreſſed with the weight of maternal affliction, I have daily implored the great diſpenſer of events to remove me from this ſcene of miſery: but at this moment, I thank my God, that he decrees I ſtill ſhould linger on this ſide the grave, for the purpoſe of adminiſtering ſome little comfort to your unfortunate ſituation! The tear that now weeps down my cheek is not the effuſion of parental ſorrow, it is the guſh of wounded affection for my afflicted Sovereign!" She then attempted to ſalute my hand, which I declined; and, yielding to the warm impulſe of nature, with a grateful heart I threw my arms around her neck, and wept.---I now pour a libation to the venerable dame.*

Rocheſter. I preſume it is now my turn to propoſe a toaſt.

* See Hume.

Nell Gwyn. I will tell you who you ſhall give.

Rocheſter. I accede to your propoſal.

Nell Gwyn. You ſhall give us, the Country Girl, whoſe fortune you told when you was the German Conjurer.

Rocheſter. How is it poſſible you ſhould know any thing of that incident?

Nell Gwyn. The confuſion you are in betrays you.

Lady Luke. I hope you did not ſeduce the poor ſilly Country Girl?

Rocheſter. I ſcorn your idea.

Lady Luke. Have you never ſeen her ſince?

Lord Rocheſter. Never.

Lady Luke. You have often ſeen her, and have frequently ſpoken to her.

Lord Rocheſter. Never, never.

Lady Luke. Suppoſe I tell you, that you have been ſpeaking to her this moment:---

[*Mimicking the Country Girl.*

Good Chriſtian Doctor, tell me when I am to be married.

Lord Rocheſter. Confuſion! I recollect that voice. Had I known it had been you---

Lady Luke. However, you will bear teſtimony to the innocence of the poor girl.

Lord Rocheſter. Yes! But not to her integrity, for ſhe robbed me of a guinea.

Lady Luke. That guinea was well diſtributed among the watchmen who protected her.

Sir Oliver. What are you talking of, Lady Luke?

Nell Gwyn. We allude to a diſguiſe her Ladyſhip once aſſumed, to deceive Lord Rocheſter.

The King. I never heard of this frolic.

Nell Gwyn. I will tell you the whole circumſtance ſome other time.

The King. Let me aſk you, Rocheſter, if you have lately diſplayed any flaſhes of wit, if you have uttered any *bon mot* worth being recorded, without raiſing a bluſh on the female cheek?

Lord Rocheſter. The latter part of your queſtion is ſuperfluous reſpecting bluſhes; for, though we live among the fair creation, and may very properly denominate them flowers, we cannot ſo properly give them the poetical appellation of *Bluſhing* Roſes!

The King. Very good!

Lord Rocheſter. With regard to your Majeſty's general inquiry, I muſt own I have been dull and melancholy of late.

Killigrew. Rocheſter was delivered of a tolerable *bon mot* yeſterday. We were walking, Sir, together, and we met Shadwell the poet: He accoſted us, and ſaid,---" Gentlemen, I wonder to ſee you abroad in ſuch bad weather." To which Rocheſter replied, " I believe you and I are walking from different motives; I walk in order to get an appetite to my dinner; and you, perhaps, Mr. Shadwell, to procure a dinner for your appetite: and therefore you ſhall dine with me."

Nell Gwyn. I think there is as much ill-nature as wit in that *bon mot.*

Lord Rocheſter. However, the bard drank copiouſly of the viny helicon, till, big with the god, he reeled with poetic majeſty into my carriage, which conveyed him home.

Sir Charles Sedley. Give me leave to inform your Majeſty that Sir Oliver is ſtealing again a glance at his watch.

The King. Then I'll keep my word, and adjourn the Court.

[*They all riſe, the King goes to Lady Luke, and ſalutes her.*

Sir Charles Sedley. Are we, Sir, to follow your example?

The King. By no means, I am in this inſtance only, Sir Oliver's taſter! Before we part, I will repeat to the bridegroom four lines, written ſome time ago by Sir Charles Sedley, addreſſed to the bride:---

Were I Apollo? no! I would not chuſe
The gay Ann Kill'grew for my darling muſe;
Let other nymphs the learned mount aſcend;
She ſhould be Thetis!—and the day ſhould end.

Now I imagine, Sir Oliver, that you are Apollo: here is Thetis, and the day is ended.---Adieu.

[*The King retires---the Gentlemen follow.*

Nell Gwyn. I will now, as your Ladyſhip's bride-maid, attend you to your bed-chamber; where, like a poor hare, after various windings, you will be taken on the very ſpot from which you ſat out.

Lady Luke. You never can be ſerious.

Nell Gwyn. What has happened? You appear ſuddenly depreſſed.

Lady Luke. It is impoſſible for me, in the preſent moment, not to be agitated.

Nell Gwyn. What! does the ſpirited Ann Killigrew yield to viſionary fears?

Lady Luke. I beg you will ſuppreſs your jocularity for the preſent.

Nell Gwyn. I will only add a few words more: as we both have gargled our mind with a little ſputtering of the Latin tongue, I will diſperſe your apprehenſions with a line from Martial's Epigrams:---*Pæte non dolet.*

THE END OF THE THIRD AND LAST ACT.

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OF

THE WELCH HEIRESS.

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

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